



Saracens and Franks in 12th - 15th Century European and Near Eastern Literature: Perceptions of Self and the Other

Aman Y. Nadhiri

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Saracens and Franks in 12th - 15th Century European and Near Eastern Literature examines the tension between two competing discourses in the medieval Muslim Mediterranean and medieval Christian Europe: one rooted in the desire to understand the world and one's place in it, and another promoting an ethnocentric narrative. To this end, it examines the construction of an image of the Other for Muslims in the Eastern Mediterranean and for Christians in Western Europe in works of literature, particularly in the works produced in the centuries preceding the Crusades; and it explores the ways in which both Muslim and Christian writers depicted the Enemy in historical accounts of the Crusades. The author focuses on medieval works of ethnography and geography, travel literature, Muslim and Christian accounts of the Crusades, and the romances of Western Europe to trace the evolution of the image of the Eastern Mediterranean Muslim in medieval Western Europe and the Western European Christian in the medieval Muslim world, first to understand the construct in the respective scholarly communities, and then to analyze the ways in which this conception informs subsequent works of non-fiction and fiction (in the Western European context) in which this Muslim or Christian Other plays a prominent role. In its analysis of the medieval Mediterranean Muslim and European Christian approaches to difference, this book interrogates the premises underlying the concept of the Other, challenging formulations of binary opposition such as the West versus Islam/Muslims.

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